READERS' EXCHANGE

The church is right in its refusal to endorse homosexuality, and that is what the homosexual community demands. Until they come to Jesus in repentance, the church is right to keep them at arm's length. For the church to accept practicing homosexuals would be akin to accepting avowed adulterers who take pride in their adultery. — *David Reagan, Drawer K, McKinney, TX 75069*

(The church can accept homosexuality as a perplexing human phenomenon, as "abnormal" if that is the word, without endorsing homosexual acts. There are many homosexuals who abstain from sexual acts just as there are heterosexuals who abstain. Whether the church accepts those who commit homosexual acts depends on the attitude of those caught up in this sin. The church must distinguish between those who "take pride" in their sin, regardless of the sin, and those who long for something better. In any event, the church, like its Lord, is to receive sinful men and with compassion. It is better to err on the side of compassion and conciliation than on the side of harshness and rejection. But one thing for sure, the church must never approve of what it clearly sees to be sin. — *Ed.*)

A basic problem with our Bible study is that we are apt to read into passages what we want them to say rather than what God really said. So, balancing our need to understand the intent rather than the letter of what God says in His Word, there is great need for us to avoid shading any passage with our own pet theories. This is what happens when brethren develop a "law of exclusion" and "law of silence." — *Ray Downen, Box 1065, Joplin, MO. 64802*

Reading your "The Campbell Myth" made me realize that one of the factors that influenced my sojourn away from sectarianism was the the Memphis School of Preaching, which was then at Getwell, taught me to respect Campbell and Stone. I so respected them that I began reading them, only to discover that they too were flawed. but I caught the true spirit of their reformation, which got me interested in your paper in 1970. So while there is a myth involved in their adoration, we are nonetheless led to look more deeply into our heritage and to the freedom that Campbell envisioned. — *Michael Hall, 1333 N. 23rd St., Grand Junction, CO 81501*

Steve Eckstein, now at Michigan Christian College, will be speaking at Irondyke Family Camp near La Grande, Oregon, July 27-Aug. 2. Write the camp at Box 99, La Grande, Oregon 97850 or call 503-963-0268. — *Don Henry, La Grande, OR.*

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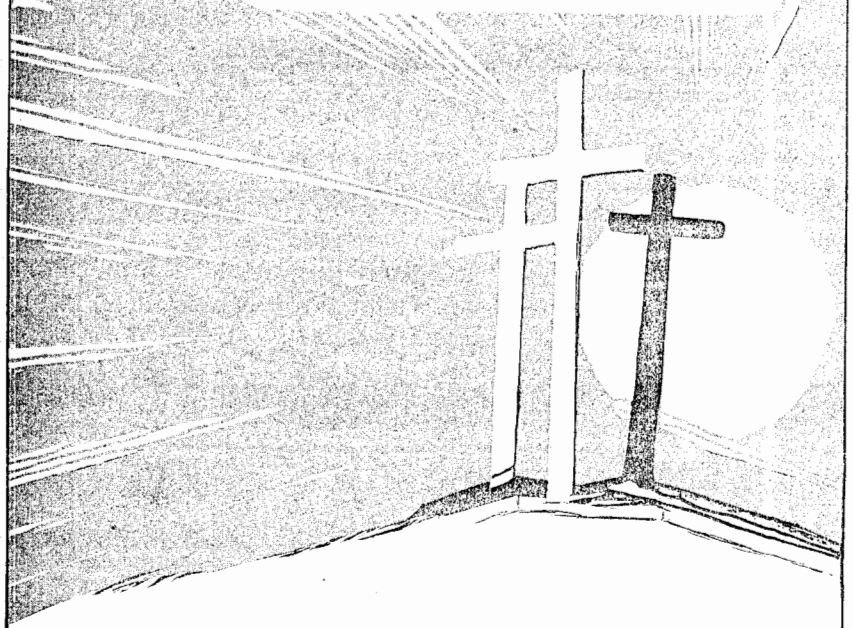

That the Holy Spirit dwells in God's children is definitely stated: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:9) . . . On Pentecost Peter first preached the word, and then promised "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to those who repented and were baptized. More faith in the Scriptures would remove the difficulties of any who have not believed in the indwelling Spirit. — *K. C. Moser*

In This Issue:
Did They Have To Be Baptized Twice to Recieve The Holy Spirit?

Volume 28, No. 7 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **September, 1986**

Adventures of the Early Church . . .

DID THEY HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED TWICE TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

One sure mark of the primitive ecclesia of Christ was that it was Spirit-filled. The chronicle in the Scriptures that tells the church's story could as well be called "Acts of the Holy Spirit" as well as "Acts of the Apostles." They walked by the Spirit, were led by the Spirit, were taught by the Spirit, and were even comforted by the Spirit. And so we have imagery such as drinking of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, being baptized of the Spirit, and even the pouring out of the Spirit. They thus thought in terms of "sowing to the Spirit" and "the fruit of the Spirit." They realized that the Spirit could be grieved, resisted, and sinned against. The Spirit often monitored their labors by telling them where to go or not to go, so that when one reads as far as Acts 20 he is not surprised to learn that an apostle is "bound in the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem.

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the early Christians were recipients of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells the Galatians (3:3) that they had "begun in the Spirit" and that since they were sons "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (4:6). In Gal. 3:2 he tells them plainly that they had received the Spirit, so the only question was whether the Spirit had been given them through faith or by works of law. In the same letter he refers to their being "born according to the Spirit" (4:29), and so such "fruit of the Spirit" as love, joy and peace is expected.

Paul assures the Ephesians that they were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" when they became believers (1:13), and in 2:18 he states that their access to God was by means of that indwelling Spirit. They were, moreover, "strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner man" (3:16), and they were instructed to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3). Strangely enough, even though they already possessed the Spirit they were told to "be filled with the Spirit" (5:18). This suggests that the heart of a believer, like a refreshing stream, can be filled and running over with the Spirit, and yet be filled even more, depending on the believer's capacity and desire.

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Hardly anything is clearer in Scripture than the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Ro. 5:5 refers to God's love being poured out in our hearts "by the Holy Spirit who was given us," and Ro. 8:9 strongly asserts that "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." But no passage is more reassuring than 1 Jn. 4:13: "By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

There can be no question, therefore, as to whether the early Christians believed that the Holy Spirit was with them and in them, even as Christ had promised. The question raised here is *when* did they receive the Holy Spirit, and was its reception dependent on some experience they had after becoming Christians, such as "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," as is commonly claimed today? If some "Charismatics" today are correct, the early Christians had to be twice-baptized to be filled with the Spirit. First in water, then in the Spirit, and there might be years between these.

Some of the verses already referred to indicate that in the early church they received the Holy Spirit when they believed and obeyed the gospel. Paul would never have argued with the Galatians as he did if they did not possess the Spirit when they became Christians: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" He makes it equally clear in Eph. 1:13 that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit when they believed, while in Eph. 4:6 he names it exactly: *they received the Spirit when they became sons of God.*

One cannot study 2 Cor. 1:21-22 without concluding that one receives the Spirit when he becomes a Christian, for in those verses he names four things that happen: (1) God establishes the believer in Christ; (2) God anoints the believer; (3) God seals the believer; (4) God gives the Spirit to the believer. One may as well say that one becomes a Christian and sometime afterward, maybe years, he is established in Christ as to say he becomes a Christian and afterward he may receive the Spirit. The natural interpretation of those verses would be that one receives all four of these blessings when he becomes a Christian.

So we may conclude that one need be baptized but *once* to receive the Holy Spirit. This is the "one baptism of Eph. 4:4, and this is the meaning of Acts 2:38 where the apostle Peter tells the crowd on Pentecost to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is similar to 2 Cor. 1:21-22 in that multiple promises are made: not only the forgiveness of sins but also the gift of the Holy Spirit. Reason demands that we conclude that one receives the Spirit when he receives the forgiveness of sins.

How many times did those on Pentecost have to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins? The same number as for receiving the Holy Spirit!

There is no evidence in Scripture that those who were once baptized in water were ever urged to be baptized a second time — this time "Spirit baptism" — in order to receive the Spirit. If this were an experience in the early church, we could expect various urgings and entreaties regarding a second baptism whereby the Spirit would come into their hearts. To the contrary we find language such as Acts 5:32: *God gives the Holy Spirit to all those who obey Him.* He doesn't say that we are to long for, pray for, "be anxious" for the Holy Spirit. It is simply that we are to obey God and he will give us the Holy Spirit. This is so generally the case in Scripture that there is the suggestion that God is so faithful to give the Spirit to those who obey him that believers *might* have the Holy Spirit and not know it. Such as in 1 Cor. 6:19: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

This verse shows that believers may have the Holy Spirit and not even know it. We can only conclude that the Corinthians received the Spirit when they believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8). Just as one may be rich and not realize it, he may have the Holy Spirit and not realize it. And so Paul is urging them to make more of a blessing they already have. Conspicuously absent is any urging from the apostle to "get the second blessing" or "be baptized with the Holy Spirit" or whatever. The Corinthians were baptized but once, at which time they received the Spirit.

There are two irregularities in Scripture in reference to this subject that should be noted, irregular in the sense that they do not follow the sequence implied in the above Scriptures: faith, baptism, Holy Spirit.

One is in Acts 8 in the case of the Samaritans, who believed and were baptized (verse 12), but who did not receive the Holy Spirit. That the record would emphasize this is another indication that the usual order was faith, baptism, Holy Spirit. But here we have the unusual in that people are baptized but do *not* receive the Spirit. The story goes on to reveal that apostles go to Samaria to correct the situation. They lay their hands on the baptized believers and they receive the Holy Spirit (verse 17). So in Samaraia we have an exceptional order: faith, baptism — a time sequence — laying on of hands, Holy Spirit. We have no way of knowing for sure why the Samaritans did not receive the Spirit when they were baptized. Even Luke the historian, as he tells the story, implies that they should have. The apostles correct the situation by the laying on of hands, not by urging upon them some kind of second baptism of the Spirit.

It would be reasonable to conclude that something went wrong in Samaria, obstructing the usual process, such as a defective faith. In any event the exception does not control the rule but the rule controls the exception. The rule is faith, baptism, Holy Spirit, and that is why Paul asked an itinerant band of disciples, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). When they answered in the negative the apostle knew something was wrong, and the question he poses goes far in substaining the point of this article, "Into what then were you baptized?" The apostle saw the one baptism into Christ as the means of receiving the Spirit.

If it was unthinkable to Paul that one would be a baptized believer and yet not have the Holy Spirit, why should it not be to us? Then why all this talk about "Holy Spirit baptism" as a means of receiving the Spirit, perhaps many years after one has been baptized into Christ?

The other exception to the order is in Acts 10 at the house of Cornelius where the order is faith, Holy Spirit, baptism. Here they receive the Spirit when they believe (or while hearing the word). This situation provides one of the strongest testimonials for the place of baptism, for if ever baptism could be passed over as of only minor significance it would be here with people who had already received the Holy Spirit. And so there was cause for the question, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (verse 47) The apostle Peter's response is remarkable: "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." This should lay to rest forever any claim that baptism isn't all that significant. Even those who had already received the Holy Spirit were commanded by an apostle to be baptized.

This exception hardly affects my argument that a believer need be baptized but once to receive the Spirit, for at the house of Cornelius they received the Spirit before they were baptized even once. But they *were* baptized once at an apostle's command.

These exceptions should cause us to be slow about putting God in a box and dictating what he will do and not do. As with his mercy, he will give his Spirit to whom he will, and we can nail down no precise order that has no exceptions.

But we can identify what *usually* took place in the early church. All believers received the Holy Spirit, and in this order: faith, repentance, baptism, Holy Spirit, *usually.*

More important by far than the when was the fact of the Spirit's presence. The Spirit impelled and empowered them, so that Paul would eventually equate the kingdom of God itself to the fact: "The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

What matters to us today is that the Holy Spirit is God's gift to all who trust and obey him. This truth should not be distorted by the misconception that the sealing, filling, drinking, receiving or baptism of the Spirit is some kind of "second blessing" or "second baptism" for the few who become privileged citizens in the kingdom. Once the church taps that great resource of power that God has given to all his children we will once more make it evident that the true Body of Christ upon earth is Spirit-filled and power-filled. To be once baptized is quite adequate for all blessings that are in Christ. It is often a matter of realizing what God did for us when we believed and obeyed the gospel in "the washing of regeneration." Some of us may be like the man who lived all his life in poverty atop a gold mine and never knew it. — *the Editor*

SHOULD THE WORDS OF CHRIST BE IN RED?

I recall the first Bible I ever made any serious attempt to read. It was the old family Bible with decorated pages between the Testaments that served as a record of births, marriages and deaths. It was of course the King James Version even though I was then unaware of different versions. What especially impressed me was that the words of Christ were in red. This meant that some books, such as *Matthew,* would have a great deal of red print, while others even in the New Testament, such as *Romans,* would have no red at all. And of course most of the big Bible, the Old Testament, would be completely void of any red.

While I was then in no position to be critical of this device, I recall that it made this distinct impression upon my young mind: *what Jesus actually says is the most important part of the Bible.* While all the Bible was the inspired word of God, I surely believed, the words in red are to be taken more seriously and with greater reverence than the rest.

I did not then of course, ask myself why the words of God himself, who now and again actually speaks in Scripture, were not in some special color so as to distinguish them from the rest, such as at the burning bush in Ex. 3:14, where God identifies himself to Moses, and in Rev. 21:5 where He who sits upon the throne at last speaks and declares, "Behold, I make all things new," which must be one of the most sublime lines ever written. But it is not in color as are the words of Christ in the next chapter.

All these years I have studied from "black and white" Bibles and had almost forgotten that there are still Bibles "in color." I was reminded of this when I received my copy of the *New King James Version,* published by Thomas Nelson Co., which is in color, and I notice in the Nelson catalogue that most of their editions of this new version are advertised as "Words of Christ in Red." My copy has this notice on its dark blue cover, but even though there is an extensive preface to this revision of a very old translation, there is no reason given for the color. One may assume that Christ's words are in red because they are supposed to be.

The words in color are sometimes especially conspicuous, such as in Acts 20:35, where amidst all the black print there suddenly appears a red line, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." While the gospel narratives, where most all the red print is, do not record this saying of Jesus, it is one of those "unwritten sayings" — *agraphe* the scholars call them — that the apostle knew about. It was appropriate for him to quote it in his address to the Ephesian elders, and since it was Jesus who originally said it and not Paul, it is in red in my new Bible.

This is as good a place as any to put to the test my boyhood conclusion that the words in red are more important, and what other reason could there be for dressing up the words of our Lord unless we assume that is was done strictly arbitrarily? The apostle reveals some crucial truths in Acts 20, such as in verse 28 where we are told it is the Holy Spirit that makes men elders and that the church was purchased with Christ's own blood, and in verse 32 where God's grace is revealed as the source of edification. Then in verse 35 he quotes Jesus and we have a red line.

Perhaps that line "It is more blessed to give than to receive" *is* the most important truth in the chapter. And is it not more important the way it reads than if Paul had made that statement on his own and had not quoted the Lord? If Paul had said it is more blessed to give than to receive it would have been no less true and no less Scripture (and no less inspired?) but would it have been as significant?

I am about to conclude that those Bible publishers who have elected to put Christ's own words in red so as to set them apart as especially important are right. My boyhood assumption that the words I saw in red in the big book I was reading were the most significant ones may have been right after all. That would at least be generally true, for as I have already suggested, it would surely be as significant when God himself speaks, as when he speaks from the throne of heaven.

You might put this to the test on your own and you could use 2 Cor. 12 where again we have a single red line in a sea of black ones. The chapter is mind-boggling in its disclosure in that it tells of Paul's

transposition into heaven, and it goes on to reveal why the apostle was given a thorn in the flesh. As breathtaking as all that is, verse 9, which is in red, seems more significant: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Or you might try 1 Cor. 11 where again we have but four or five lines in red amidst all the black ones, the only red lines that appear in the entire sixteen chapters of the letter. But those few lines, which tell us what our Lord said during the Passover supper which gives meaning to our Communion service, appear to be the most significant in the entire book.

But maybe not. It could be argued that nothing can be more sublime or more important than Paul's love hymn in the thirteenth chapter or his description of the gospel and the ressurection in the fifteenth chapter. And it may be that the great truths about Christ, such as John's description of Christ as the eternal Logos in John 1, which William Barclay describes as the greatest truth ever revealed in any religion, are as significant as the words Jesus actually uttered.

What all this means is that some things in the Bible are far more important than other things, and that it is Jesus Christ that is the most important of all. And surely Christ's own words as they are reported by the evangelists are among the most important if not the most important words in the Bible. So there is good reason to put them in red, just as we might put the words of God himself in gold.

This illustrates a fact that is vital to an understanding of Scripture: *all truths are equally true but all truths are not equally important.*

What really matters about the Bible is that it points to Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is vitally important because it anticipates "the Sun of Righteousness that rises with healing in its wings" (Mal 4:2), but the New Testament is far more important because it tells the finished story of God's love for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the wonderful Person of the Bible and it is he that gives it meaning. What he did and what he said is therefore the most significant thing about the Bible. The reason we believe in the apostolicity of the church and the authority of the apostles is because Jesus chose them as his ambassadors. They were therefore qualified to tell us more about Jesus Christ, which is what matters most of all.

This is why the Bible must always be judged by the spirit of Christ and not the other way around. Those portions of Scripture whether in the Old or New Testament that bring us into closer fellowship with the spirit of Christ and conform us more to Christ's likeness are by far the most important. When we see the Innocent One die on the Cross for the sins of the world and hear him pray for his enemies, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,* we can know that this is the spirit of Christ and this is what matters most of all. In my new Bible that prayer is scored in red, appropriately. If it is not in yours it would be in order to underline it, along with a mental note: *the forgiving spirit of Christ is to be in my heart; this is what it means to be a Christian.*

Those who would underline every word of the Bible as if it were all equally important come under the judgment of our Lord's stinging words to the Pharisees in Jn. 5:39: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me."

In my new Bible those words are in red, and properly so, for they reveal that eternal life is not in a book but in a Person. — *the Editor*

WHY I WILL NOT MISS CHURCH ON SUNDAY
(Except For One Reason)

A few years back when I was serving my term as an elder in our church here in Denton I had ocasion to tell my fellow elders of my view of the Lord's day, particularly in reference to being at my place in the assembly each Sunday.

We were discussing the subject because as a "freer" Church of Christ we no longer harangued our members about "forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" or browbeat them about being present on Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday night. But as "liberated" souls our folk seemed inclined toward antinomianism, the doctrine that rejects law in the life of the Christian. We now taught our people that love should motivate us to please the Lord and that we attend church because we want to and not because we have to. But now that our folk were "free" they didn't attend church as regularly as when they had to.

I find this often to be the case among "more open" members of Churches of Christ. Liberation tends to invite license. Now that God's grace has flooded their lives, displacing a debilitating legalism, they don't attend church as they once did. Now and again such ones come by to see us and as often as not they are travelling when they would have once been in church. So as to "stay on schedule," as they sometimes put it, they will leave early on Sunday and travel all day, missing church. In one recent case of folk we had known for a long time, I said to Ouida, "They would not have done that a few years ago, but now they are what they call *free.*"

I told the elders that I viewed the Lord's day as a standing date with Jesus Christ and my fellow believers. It is an appointment that I do not break for any reason except an emergency. If I were on my way to the assembly and came upon someone in distress, as in an automobile accident, I would of course stop and render aid and remain as long as necessary, even if it meant missing church. Or if it were necessary I would miss church to care for sick loved ones. I might miss the assembly so as to work and make a living, but only temporarily, for I would prayerfully endeavor to position myself so that I would not always have to work on Sundays — or to at least be free from work long enough to attend church, as was the case with the slaves in the early church. And of course we can't attend when we are ill, but that is not a matter of will. Many of us often attend church when we are not feeling well.

This is a rule I have always followed as a believer. I have a date each Sunday morning and I do not break it (period), wherever I am and whatever the circumstance. I will not fly to an appointment, academic or otherwise, if I have to miss church. A few years back I flew from New York to Geneva with several other ministers for a gathering of leaders from the World Council of Churches. We flew all Saturday night, arriving at our quarters, which happened to be a Roman Catholic facility conducted by nuns, early Sunday morning.

Having been up all night it was understandable that the visiting churchmen all piled into bed and slept that Sunday morning. But I quietly informed one of the nuns that I would be going to church somewhere. The word spread quickly among the sisters, and I overheard one of them saying, "One of them wants to go to church; he must be a Catholic." Learning that I was other than Roman Catholic, they proceeded to put me in touch with one of the secretaries of the convention, a Protestant, who walked me through the streets of ancient Geneva to her church, a Church of Scotland congregation where John Knox once preached. It was a delightful and memorable experience! I worshipped with believers from several nations and enjoyed a typical British "tea" following the service. Before the day was over I was a guest in the home of the pastor and his wife, old Scots who were proud of their heritage. That was all far better than spending the Lord's day in bed!

The Lord always rewards us when we are faithful in keeping our appointment with him each week in an assembly of believers, somewhere and some place. It does not have to be a Church of Christ, though I admit that that is where I start in my search when I am a stranger in a strange land, if for no other reason I believe the Lord's day and the Lord's table are meaningfully related. It isn't often that I am able to "break bread" with fellow believers when it is a church outside the Stone-Campbell tradition.

Years ago when I was in faraway Taichung, Taiwan on a Fulbright assignment I had an address of an army officer who conducted a "Church of Christ" service in his home. Aware of both language and transportation obstacles I began my search for his home early that Sunday morning. A pedicab (a two-wheel cart pulled by a man) delivered me to the officer's home, but he had moved and there was no longer any such service at that place. Dismissing the pedicab, I began to walk up one street and down the other. I was confident that the Lord and I would keep our appointment, and that in that Buddhist country I would come upon an assembly of Christians. The hour was still early.

I walked by Buddhist temples and shrines and I enjoyed absorbing the culture of so strange a land, but no church. At last I heard a familiar hymn, one that has since meant more to me because of that experience, coming from a store front, *All for Jesus, All for Jesus*, in Chinese of course. It was obviously the *tune* that I recognized. I walked in and was warmly received by Christian believers. The leader spoke English, and ascertaining that I was indeed a believer, I was invited to remain after the evangelistic service for the assembly only for believers where there was exhortation and the Lord's Supper. It was an assembly of Plymouth Brethren, and I appreciated the distinction they made, one I believe to be eminently scriptural. They preach to the world in an evangelistic service, and then dismiss them. Then they gather as believers, encourage one another in mutual ministry, and break bread in memory of the blessed Christ. This too proved to be a joyous experience, even though it was all in Chinese. The universal language of love somehow transcends all our confusion of tongues.

On that same visit to Taiwan they scheduled us visiting professors to fly to the British crown colony of Victoria (Hong Kong), from whence we would visit the Portugese colony of Macao, which I was eager to see. But alas, the Macao trip was scheduled for Sunday morning. So I missed seeing Macao. This time I searched out a Church of Christ mission and ended up enjoying a beautiful fellowship with Ira Rice and other missionaries in Hong Kong. That may be one reason Ira has been reluctant to write me off as a hopeless "liberal," as some of his associates do. He and I do not write each other up, even if we are editor bishops!

Once I laid this view of the Lord's day before my fellow elders, one of our members who was meeting with us that night expressed concern over what he considered a strict position. He wanted to know if the other elders agreed with me. One of them said he did. I've noticed that *that* brother is one who is always in his place at the Sunday morning assembly, while other of our members think nothing of using the Lord's day for travel, skiing, hunting or what have you. I am persuaded that our sisters who stay home from church to prepare for company or our brothers who

"sleep in" because they worked late the night before have not yet learned the meaning of discipleship which calls for commitment.

This was one of the true marks of a Christian in a time when it was dangerous to be a follower of Christ, *that they assembled on the Lord's day to remember Jesus in his appointed way.* History itself, as well as the New Testament, attests to this. Pliny, called the younger, was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor when it was against the law to be a Christian. Finding some of these culprits in his province, he wrote to Trajan the emperor as to what he should do with them. In his letter he writes of the Christians that "they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before sunrise" and he refers to their singing and eating together.

Pliny and other authorities forbade such assemblies and demanded that the disciples deny Christ at pain of death. Some did deny Christ and forsook the assemblies, but those who resolved to be "faithful unto death" moved underground and continued their meetings, sometimes in catacombs, sometimes in a back street. The Ichthus symbol, the sign of the fish, in time became a secret marker as to where the believers were gathering. It is true even today in unfree nations that Christians have to hide out in order to keep their appointment with Christ and with each other.

Justin Martyr in about 150 A.D. in his *Apology* gives a detailed account of the Christian assembly, which is relevant to what I am saying in that he refers to "them that are not present." From the martyr's narrative it is evident that the absent members were not out golfing or picnicing at the lake, for he tells how "the Eucharistic elements," of which they all partook in the assembly, were taken by the deacons to those who were absent — obviously absent out of necessity. This attests to how seriously the early Christians regarded the assembly. Justin begins his description with "On the day which is called the day of the sun there is an assembly of all those who live in the towns or in the country."

There is an assembly of believers! Here we have a crucial mark of the Christian faith, Christianity being the only world religion, along with Judaism, that has a called assembly of the faithful. A Buddhist or a Muslim or a Confucianist or a Shintoist frequents his shrine as an individual or as a family, but not as a congregation. If he prays he prays alone; if he partakes of ritual food he does so alone. Followers of Christ have an appointment with their Lord on "the Lord's day" and he is with them as his Body in a special way. If there is meaning in our Lord's words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20), there is also meaning in the apostle's statement, "When you come together as a church" (I Co. 11:20). It is apparent that Paul took it for granted that they *would* assemble as a church in corporate worship.

There is no evidence that the early Christians had to be urged to gather as a church. A passage we so often use, Heb. 11:25 ("Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some") may have no reference to the called assembly on Lord's day, but to a practice among those Hebrew believers of frequently meeting together and urging each other to be prepared for that impending Day that is referred to, probably the destruction of Jerusalem. The writer wanted them to continue that practice since it was a means of keeping them faithful.

They assembled as a church because they were believers. And that is where I take my stand. When the church assembles as his Body on the Lord's day as it has for two thousand years, I should be there if I am a part of that Body. Where else could I better be? Except for an emergency or a special case of showing mercy, I should meet my appointment with the Lord around his table and with his people. That is where I belong on Lord's day.

I am amazed that some of my brethren who talk of "being liberated by grace" refer to this commitment to the Lord's day as "legalism." That is why I will not miss church — because I have been made free by grace. I do not go to church because I think I have to or to pick up Brownie points or to perform "five acts of worship" or to work my way to heaven. I do not "assemble as a church" with fellow believers in order to be saved, which I suppose would be legalism, but because I am saved.

We should be at the assembly because our dearest friend, the one who died for us, will be there in a special way. We have a date. We should fear that we would disappoint him if we were not there. If we are faithful, he will be even more faithful. One day we will be like John the apostle and "be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," or something like that, for He who is faithful will reward faithfulness in his children. He who honors the Lord will be honored, a prophet assures us.

But there is more. We should not miss the assembly because the early Christians would not, even when it was dangerous. We should be with the gathered church because that is where Luther was, and Tyndale and Wycliffe, Calvin and Zwingli, Campbell and Stone, Eliza Davies and Selina Campbell. Ouida tells me that Eliza would walk six miles through Australian back country to gather with "the Little Flock" and six miles back, sore feet or no. She did it because she was a disciple of Christ.

So I join all of them and all of you on the Lord's day. We should make no exceptions except for mercy's sake. Where else can we better be? — *the Editor*

The unexamined life is not worth living — *Socrates*

THE HOUR IS COME

W. Carl Ketcherside

"The hour is come." Repeatedly in the past Jesus had affirmed "My hour is not yet come." Suddenly he changes and affirms its arrival. It was inevitable and certain. And with its coming he offers a prayer for glorification. I wish I had an adequate definition for glory. It would be of inestimable value in understanding John 17. It is used in the various forms, over and over, in the chapter. I know some things about it. To the Jewish people it carried with it the idea of weight, or heaviness. It was not a mere evanescent something. Paul uses the expression " a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17) when he compares it with our *light* affliction.

I know the Hebrew word is *kabed*, and the Greek is *doxa*, but that does not tell me a lot. Like other words these are symbols of the qualities, and have been selected by men to describe the inner sense of meaning. Words are poor substitutes for the ideas they seek to convey, necessary as they are. I have often explored the word with others, but they are generally as limited as myself, so I am about resigned to awaiting his *epiphany* which will be both uplifting and destructive (2 Thess. 2:8). In any event Jesus asked the Father to grant the weight of His presence to him. The accompanying brightness so often mentioned in this connection is not the glory, but the visible manifestation that it is present.

Jesus wanted the glory to be mutual, or reciprocal. He would glorify the Father as well as receiving glory from Him. The Father had given him power over all flesh. This was not *dunamis*, or inherent power. It was *exousia*, delegated authority. It had been bestowed upon him. Jesus has received authority over all flesh. I gather that this does not refer to the body with its tissues and cells. It may be employed as it is in Acts 2:17, where Joel is quoted, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." I take this to refer to Jew and Gentile alike, without prejudice or distinction.

The purpose of this was that he should give eternal life to as many as had been given him. The fact that Jesus has authority over all flesh did not automatically grant them eternal life. It did not obviate the right of their individual choice. To be given authority is one thing, to be given individuals destined to eternal life is another thing. It is essential that eternal life be defined. Otherwise, we will think of it in terms of days and years. It does not refer to the quantity of time, but to its quality. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. The abundant life does not consist of how long we live, but of how we live. It is not spending time but sharing life. Some of us live more abundantly in one day than others do in a year.

Jesus defines it as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he sent. "True" refers to reality, and God is the only one who is real. He is genuine. He is not counterfeit. There is no other with which to compare Him. He is the only one. All other gods were made by man, but man himself was made by the only true God. And eternal life is to know Him and the anointed savior, for that is the meaning of the words — Jesus Christ!. But the word "know" in the scripture has a more profound meaning than we generally accord it in our conversation. We often limit it to developing a practical grasp of a person or thing through association, instruction, or study.

But, in the sacred writings, it conveys the deeper and more intimate concept of experiencing something. It is for this reason it is used for having sexual intercourse. The first time it is employed is in the early part of Genesis. "And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore a son." Two persons were united in such a close relationship that a third, or new life, sprung from the association. That is what happens when we come to experience God and Christ in absolute and unqualified surrender. As a result of our union a new life begins. We are born again. Old things pass away. All things are made new. No wonder such an experience results in eternal life.

Jesus glorified the Father on earth by finishing the work he had been assigned. I think of this a lot of times when I see men and women in an emotional frenzy, with hands waving, eyes closed, and shouting, "Praise God," or "Hallelujah," or "Glory to God." I have a difficult time thinking of Jesus in the midst of such a sweating, straining, or shouting mob. It might be better for them to do as he did by finishing the work he has given them to do. This is what glorifies Jesus on earth. There are millions of starving, thirsting, helpless ones in the earth whom God has told us to assist. But it is easier to shout "Praise God" than to finish the work we have been alloted.

Jesus had a glory with the Father before the world was. I like that. I have seen a few characters in my time who think that Jesus was created somewhere along the line. Michael Jackson is the latest of a flock of archangels of one segment of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some of the cultists who rap on your front door and want to explain to you all that is going to happen, and when, have a kind of "up in the air" theory about Jesus. They can out-talk anyone who will let them do it. I do not let them so they soon remember they have another appointment and are late for it. I actually believe that Jesus was with the Father before the

world was. He was not some kind of after thought. "The Word was with God and the Word was God."

I do not think he was "a god" as the Jehovah's Witnesses think. They even made their own translation of the Bible, which they try to palm off as genuine on the unsuspecting, to establish that crackpot notion. But if you traced everything back to the beginning, when you get there, Jesus is already there. Before the world was he was with the Father and sharing in His glory. Glory always means "the presence of God" regardless of how much else it means. Jesus wanted the Father to glorify him with His own self. That is what happened before the world was. And that is Glory with a capital "G". — *4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1C, St. Louis 63109*

OUR CHANGING WORLD

The Institution for American Church Growth reports from recent research that growing churches show more love to their members and visitors than declining churches. While leadership, location, facility, and evangelistic fervor have all been named through the years as reasons for church growth, none of these are now considered as significant as the love and acceptance people experience when they attend a church.

We may have but few prophetic voices among us these days, but Arnold Hardin, who writes from the context of the "Conservative" Churches of Christ, often speaks like a prophet in that he calls upon us to repent. In his recent *The Persuader* he writes: "The saddest thing among us today is that brethren are programmed to believe that we must 'goose-step' to some other's tune or else be cast out. It is nothing but tragic what 'religion' does to folks. If we could only come to understand what the gospel is all about then our 'sectarian religion' could be set aside and all of us could accept each other as Christ has already accepted us, warts and all. Thank God, you do not have to agree with me in order to be saved! You only have to search for an agreement with truth. And no one can make that for you." If you want on Arnold's mailing list, the address is 2920 Prairie Creek, Dallas, TX 75227.

Wrestling With God is an hour-long film, now in preparation, dramatically portraying the heroes of the Stone-Campbell Movement during its first generation. It is to be professionally done, with David Haskell, who once portrayed John the Baptist on the stage, doing Alexander Campbell. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has passed a resolution endorsing it as historically authentic. It is something all segments of our heritage can appreciate and support, and the Endorsing Advisory Council is made up of men and women from all three of the major wings of the Movement. We invite you to make a donation to this effort, as Ouida and I have done more than once, so that it can be completed. If we give this project the help it deserves, you should be able to see it on your VCR at home or at your church. Seeing it acted out may be the best way to learn history. The address is Wrestling With God, 3600 Berry Dr., Studio City, CA 91604.

Members of Churches of Christ would be interested in Charles Colson's defense of the Collinsville, OK, Church of Christ in their litigation with Marian Guinn, which appeared in the April issue of *Christianity Today*. A Presbyterian minister in Sapulpa, OK, in the May issue of the journal, took Colson to task. He wrote, "If what he said is based on a thorough knowledge of Church of Christ practices, then I am horrified at his defense of a cruel and tyrannical system. I find it hard to believe he would actually defend a system of church discipline that forbids members to leave." I wrote to the Presbyterian minister that the Collinsville church has left the wrong impression as to Church of Christ polity, that in all the history of the Church of Christ I have never known of any church or any leader that believed a member could not leave a congregation at will. And almost certainly the Collinsville church is the only Church of Chirst ever to withdraw from a member *after* she/he withdrew membership. I further told him that we are not all that different from the Presbyterians, that the vast majority of our churches never withdraw fellowship from anyone for any reason, and that if we withdrew from all those who commit adultery that we might have a lot fewer members.

Our readers in the Michigan area will be interested in a Unity Meeting to be held in Fenton, Oct. 16-18, that will give special attention to the relationship between Biblical interpretation and factionalism. Participants will include J. Harold Thomas of the University Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas; Walter Zorn, professor at Great Lakes Bible College, Lansing, Michigan; and Leroy Garrett, editor of *Restoration Review*. For a program of events write to Integrity, 10367 Carmer, Fenton, MI 48430.

Another Sad Summer

One indication of the personal nature of this journal, personal journalism I have called it, is that Ouida and I share our joys and sorrows with our readers, many of whom are close friends and all of whom are close to our hearts. Two years ago you shared with us in the loss of our granddaughter, and now we reluctantly burden you with the sad news of the death of our son Philip, 29, who died in George Washington University Hospital in Washington, D.C. on August 2, with his mother at his side.

He came to us from an orphanage in Karlsruhe, Germany at age 6, where the overworked staff could not give him the TLC that every baby has to have. His apparent inability to give and receive love was a problem he and we could never quite solve. His younger brother, David Ben, also adopted and now a counsellor for the State of Missouri, sat in his mother's lap until he was so big it was embarrassing, and so Ouida would playfully tell him that when he weighed as much as she that *she* would sit in *his* lap! But poor Philip could not easily touch or be touched. It was the beginning of his woes and of ours.

He was never able to put it together. His apparent craving for acceptance and attention caused him to do all the wrong things, and he turned people off. He could not learn from his mistakes and would not listen to his parents. He made it through high school, gave college a brief wave of the hand, and was soon gone. We seldom heard from him in spite of our overtures. But it may simply be that we failed him as parents. We were soon to learn that he was on the fast lane, an escapade that was to cost him his life, for he died of an AIDS-related disease.

Before the end came some things improved. He could tell us that he loved us, regretted the life he had lived, and renewed his faith in Christ. When Ouida held his hand and spoke of the forgiving love of God, he nodded with quiet assurance.

While I had to stay home with Ouida's enfeebled mother, I was in constant touch by phone. When Ouida told me that Philip had only hours left, I repaired to my office and continued my study of Psalms, heeding the advice of the late William Barclay that amidst adversity one should stay busy. Before me was this line from Ps. 63:3, *Your lovingkindness (mercy) is better than life.* The commentator noted how that contradicts our most basic assumption that nothing is more precious than life and how we will pay any price for a few more years. But God's mercy, once realized, is better than life itself.

I thought of that frightened little boy that I met at Idlewild International Airport in New York 24 years ago. It was indeed so traumatic that he was never able to recall anything at all about his dramatic trip from Germany to the United States. I tried not to burden myself with all the *Whys* of his apparently misspent

life, but God's Spirit brought comfort to my sad heart with that staggering truth. If that troubled young man at last realized the mercy of God, that is better than growing old and rich and fat. Ah, God's mercy, which he is eager to show, is better than life itself!

My dear wife, who like a certain Confederate general stands like a stonewall amidst the storms of life, arranged for the cremation of the body and flew home without our adopted son. We decided on a private family memorial in our home, led by George Massey, who was until recently minister to our Denton church and who reached out to the deceased when he was a kid. In his last hours Philip remembered the preacher who was kind to him when he was a boy and told Ouida he wanted him to do his funeral. And he wanted his sister Phoebe to have the only thing of value he had in this world, a VCR and color TV. Phoebe, also adopted and who if anything loves too much, cried out in characteristic fashion, "I don't want his VCR, I want him!" But it was not to be.

Ouida brought home with her some impressive memories: the loving hospitality of our dear friends Lee and Rosemary Keesling, who took her into their home and helped her through the crisis; the professionalism and the kindness of the doctors and nurses; and Bill Wagner, a Baptist minister who comforted Ouida's aching heart when he told of how he had helped Philip find his way back to the faith he had when he was baptized as a teenager.

So we thanked and praised God for his abounding grace, realizing that there is still a great deal of goodness in the world.

We will be all right. As I told Ouida, "I don't understand, but thank God I don't have to. I only need to trust and that I do." But one day in God's tomorrow when we no longer look through the glass darkly we will understand.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" — *the Editor*

READERS' EXCHANGE

Floyd Rose, onetime minister among black Churches of Christ and now minister to the Family Baptist Church in Toledo, wrote as follows regarding the black leaders at the Gold Coast Restoration Forum that was reported on in our last issue: "The subjects to be discussed are at the heart of what the Restoration Movement was all about. It is unfortunate that the inheritors of the Movement lost the spirit of its founders. To claim to be Christians only is admirable. To claim to be the only Christians is abominable."

We are victims of a "system" of which we do not completely approve. If we continue to support that system, it is not going to change very fast. People can stand a few jabs now and then in the form of a caustic article, but they cannot stand for us to withdraw our support of the "system." If we did that, it would rapidly collapse. So I believe we need to have the courage of our convictions and begin practicing what we preach. — *Fred L. Copeland, Prescott Valley, AZ.*

A dear brother who preaches for an instrumental church of Christ and I have been doing what all of us in the Restoration heritage should have been doing all along, talking with each other. I have learned "the rest of the story" and it is not what I was taught growing up in noninstrument churches. My congregation is now providing part of my support as I go to congregations who need help. Anyone interested in my help can call me at 614-622-5461. — *Jim Blevins, 1800 Chestnut St., Coshocton, OH 43812.*

I am not so sure about Solon's wisdom being realized in our age, as you suggest, especially in reference to "Psyschologists wisely referring to the importance of one's self-image." That is contrary to the facts of what our need really is. We are too self-centered. A good study of self is Paul Brownback's *The Danger of Self Love.* Of course "self" is the big thing in the New Age movement. It is too bad that the "shrinks" try to inflate man. Let's hope that we as "stretchers" know whose image we are to put on. We really have to be stretched to do that. — *R. L. Gring, Pearsall, TX.*

(Yes, and even for self to be crucified with Christ. — *Ed.*)

Tell Ouida if she expects to collect any insurance on you she is going to have to wait awhile, for if my prayers are answered the Lord will keep you around for a good while yet to bless us with your wonderful articles. And Ouida won't mind waiting on that insurance! — *Talmadge McNabb, Brown Mills, NJ.*

(You don't know Ouida. My teacher retirement is arranged so that it ends not when I die but when *she* dies! So she gets it now and she'll get it then. Tal, I believe in your prayers, but you'll have to do a lot of praying to get ahead of that woman. — *Ed.*)

Your article on "The Campbell Myth" was priceless. It really laid bare our inconsistencies. Do you read *The Christian Appeal*? The Shelburnes have some lovely thoughts on unity in the issue I recently received. I thought of you as I read them. — *Marguerite McSpadden, Dumas, TX*

(Yes, I read *The Christian Appeal,* Gene Shelburne, editor, and I recommend it highly. The sub price is $4.00 a year. You may obtain a copy of the May issue on Unity by writing to 2440 West 11th Ave., Amarillo, TX 79106. These brethren are known as "the non-Sunday School" Church of Christ and this journal is alive to the real issues of our time. — *Ed.*)

BLACK CHURCH

Your article on "The Underbelly of the Black Church of Christ" (June issue) is degrading and insulting to all black ministers of churches of Christ in its depiction of their not having "an exemplary reputation when it comes to women" (p. 311). I view this statement as a stereotypical, racist generalization based on hearsay, which only helps to perpetuate a racial myth held by many white people about black leaders, and contributes further to the polarization of the black and white races. The Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan could not have said it better (or worse). — Jack Evans, President, Southwestern Christian College, Terrell, TX 75160.

(Probably no other journal in the history of our Movement has attempted to do more to make peace between the races than this one, and it was not my intention to invalidate that in my "Underbelly" article on the black church in the June issue. That an editor is truly colorblind is evident when he commends and criticizes without distinction. If he is a "racist" when he criticizes the black church, what is he when he criticizes the white? As for my remark "Black ministers often have less than an exemplary reputation when it comes to women," which clearly does not refer to *all* black ministers or even to most of them, I was led to that impression when I lived in a black world as a professor in a black Baptist college. The point of my article stands, and that is the leadership of the black Church of Christ must manifest more of the spirit of Christ and show more forbearing love if it is to have any real impact for good. It is unlikely that the Grand Wizard has ever manifested more vehemence toward blacks than those ministers in Miami showed toward their own black brother. If an aged and respected sister would stand in angry protest and cry out against the *hostility* (she used that word as if she were a prophet!), you can believe that it was as bad as I say. True, white preachers are often less than exemplary, but this time around I was reporting on my visit with black brethren. As I said in the June article I say again, I love the black church, including the underbelly, and I am hoping for better things. — *Ed.*)

Christ's Prison Fellowship is a newsletter issued by a ministry of the same name and sponsored by the Turnpike Church of Christ (Box 531899, Grand Prairie, TX 75053) and funded by congregations and individuals in the Dallas area. You might want to write and ask to be put on their mailing list. You will see how they are changing lives by not only ministering behind prison walls but by helping to rehabilitate prisoners once they are released.

BOOK NOTES

College Press is considering another issue of Alexander Campbell's 41-volume set of *Millennial Harbinger,* which will retail for $495.00. Advance orders can save as much as $100.00. If you are interested, let us know and we may be able to work out a way for you to pay for it over several payments. But the publisher needs an early response so that he can proceed with this monumental task with confidence.

Still in print from College Press are the two classics by Louie Cochran, *Raccoon John Smith* and *The Fool of God,* the later being a historical novel on the life of Alexander Campbell. Both books are rich in Americana as well as biography. And the genius of the Movement comes through. They are $12.95 each postpaid.

The Stone-Campbell Movement by Leroy Garrett is available at $21.95 and if you remit in advance we pay the postage. Some who have read it report to us that they read it a second and third time. You can get a copy free by sending us 8 subs to this journal, new or renewal, including your own, at $3.00 per sub, $24.00 total.

K. C. Moser's old books remain good sellers, *The Way of Salvation* and *The Gist of Romans.* Moser was among the first to appeal for renewal among Churches of Christ based upon the grace of God. $6.25 each postpaid.

The Mormon Papers questions Mormonism at its roots, their additional scriptures. $4.50 postpaid.

B. W. Johnson, one of the ablest of our pioneer preachers, first believed the Book of Revelation could not be understood. After many years of study he changed his mind and published *Vision of the Ages.* It is simply written and beautifully bound in hardcover. $7.25 postpaid.

You are not likely to find anything better on the life and letters of the great apostle than F. F. Bruce's *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free.* Extravagantly informative. $19.50 postpaid.

You will be impressed with the bound copies of this journal in matching volumes back to 1977 (earlier ones are no longer available), with colorful dustjackets. *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) and *The Ancient Order* (1978), single volumes, are 5.95 each. *Blessed Are The Peacemakers* and *With All The Mind* (1979-80) and *Jesus Today* (1981-82), double volumes, are 9.00 each. Prepaid only please. The bound volume for 1983-84, entitled *The Doe of the Dawn*, should be ready by summer.

You can help circulate this journal through our club rate for four or more names (no limit) at 3.00 per year per name. You send us the names and we do the mailing. Bundle rates to one address is the same rate. Some of our most appreciative readers are those who were introduced to the journal by someone else, so why not give this a chance with some of your friends.

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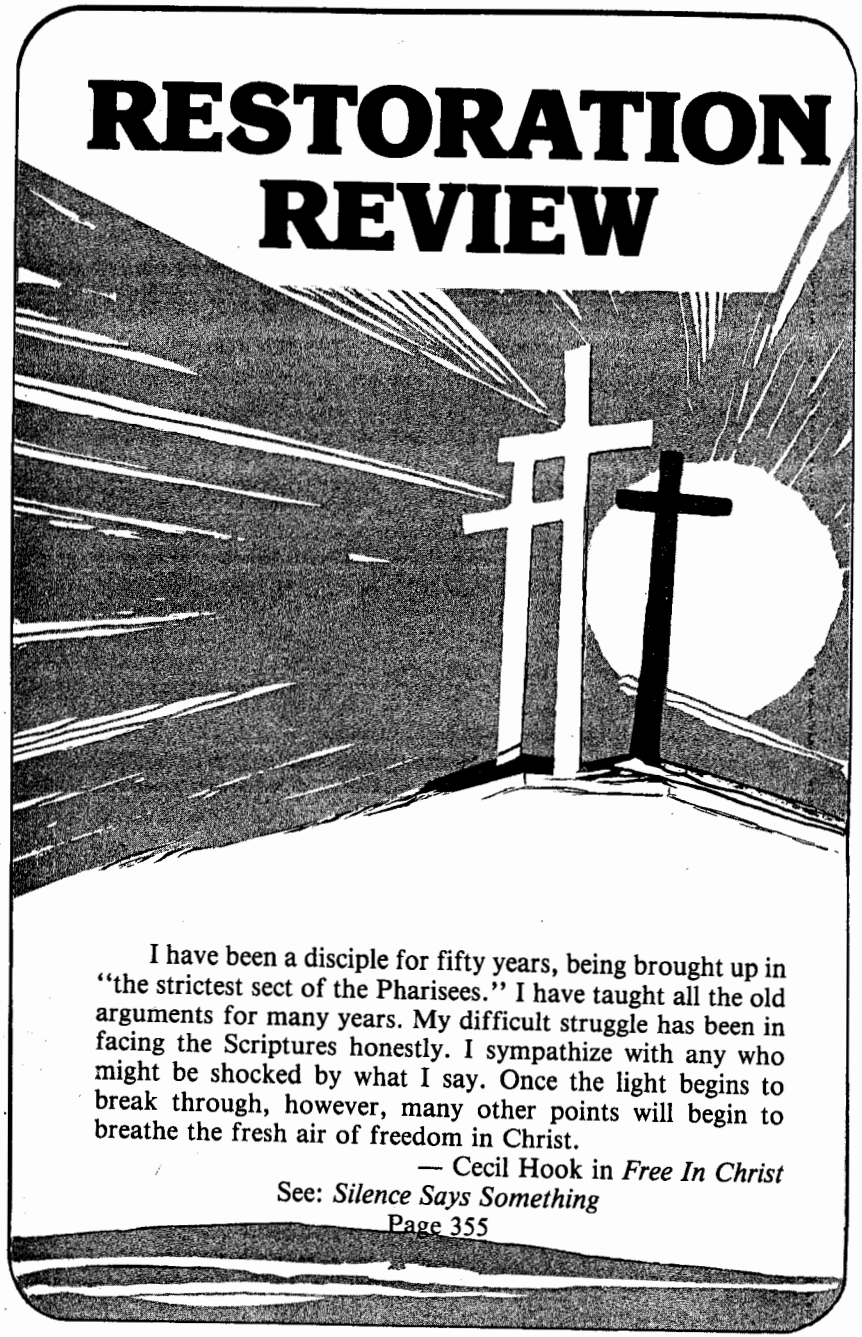
RESTORATION REVIEW



I have been a disciple for fifty years, being brought up in "the strictest sect of the Pharisees." I have taught all the old arguments for many years. My difficult struggle has been in facing the Scriptures honestly. I sympathize with any who might be shocked by what I say. Once the light begins to break through, however, many other points will begin to breathe the fresh air of freedom in Christ.

— Cecil Hook in *Free In Christ*

See: *Silence Says Something*
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